

SUPPORTING UNANIMOUS DECISION OF U.S. SENTENCING COMMISSION MAKING RETROACTIVE THE REDUCTION IN SENTENCING GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO MOST FEDERAL DRUG TRAFFICKING OFFENDERS

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 22, 2014*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the unanimous vote of the U.S. Sentencing Commission to apply retroactively the reduction in the sentencing guideline levels applicable to most federal drug trafficking offenders.

This action is welcome news to the families and loved ones of the estimated 46,290 persons eligible to have their cases reviewed by a judge to determine if their sentence should be reduced by on average of 25 months, or as much as 18.8 percent.

The United States incarcerates nearly 25 percent of the world's inmates, even though it only has 5 percent of the world's population. Thirty years ago, there were less than 30,000 inmates in the federal system; today, there are nearly 216,000, an increase of 800 percent.

This over-crowding of our federal prison system—at an annual cost of about \$6.5 billion—is the direct and proximate result of the proliferation of offenses carrying mandatory-minimums and the discriminatory 100–1 disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences in federal law.

African Americans and Hispanics comprise more than 6 in 10 federal inmates incarcerated for drug offenses. And African American offenders receive sentences that are 10 percent longer than white offenders for the same crimes and are 21 percent more likely to receive mandatory-minimum sentences than white defendants according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

The decision by the U.S. Sentencing Commission is particularly gratifying to those of us who worked tirelessly over the last two decades to restore balance and justice to federal drug sentencing policy.

In 2005, I introduced the “No More Tulias Act of 2005” (H.R. 2620) in response to the infamous drug task force scandal in Tulia, Texas that occurred six years earlier, during which 15 percent of the town's African American population was arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to decades in prison based on the uncorroborated testimony of a federally funded undercover officer with a record of racial impropriety.

Later, in 2007, I introduced the “Drug Sentencing Reform and Cocaine Kingpin Trafficking Act of 2007” (H.R. 4545), bipartisan legislation eliminating the unjust and discriminatory 100 to 1 disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences in federal law. Companion legislation in the Senate was introduced by then Senator JOSEPH BIDEN of Delaware (S. 1711).

Three years later, this effort bore fruit when the Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the “Fair Sentencing Act of 2010” (P.L. 111–220), which finally ended the 100:1 ratio that had resulted in unconscionable racial disparities in the average length of sentences for comparable offenses.

But a large gap remained in the justice provided by this landmark legislation: its provisions were not retroactive. That gap has been filled today by the unanimous vote of the Sentencing Commission.

Beginning in November of this year, all federal inmates sentenced under the old regime are to be afforded the opportunity to have their sentences reconsidered under the provisions of current law, and those eligible for release may be reunited with their families and loved ones as early as November 2015.

Mr. Speaker, the vote today by the Sentencing Commission is a giant step in the right direction as it makes federal drug sentencing policy and practice fairer for all, helps save the taxpayers millions of dollars annually, and reaffirms the premise that the men and women who have paid their debt to society are worthy of a second chance to redeem their lives and contribute to their communities.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 22, 2014*

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed the vote on the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule. Had I been present, I would have voted “no” on rollcall No. 428.

### A TRIBUTE TO MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY JOURNAL'S DR. TERENCE N. THOMAS SCHOLARSHIP ANNUAL BRUNCH

### HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 22, 2014*

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Milwaukee Community Journal's Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship Annual Brunch. The Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship Annual Brunch celebrates its 38th anniversary at the Italian Conference Center on Sunday, August 3, 2014. The annual event was established in 1996 to promote academic excellence and to pay tribute to the publisher's deceased and beloved son, Dr. Terence N. Thomas. This fund has granted over a half million dollars to students who retain a 3.0 cumulative grade average or better.

Much of the success of the Milwaukee Community Journal can be attributed to one of its founders and Publisher, Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo. The Milwaukee Community Journal evolved from a publication called the Soul City Shopper, following the 1965 riots in Milwaukee. Insurance companies had refused to pay businesses for damages incurred during the riots. Ms. Pattillo was encouraged by business leaders to assume the role of editor of the publication. She penned a barrage of editorials that eventually pressured the insurance companies to uphold their obligations by paying claims so that repairs could be made and that businesses could reopen. This effort was dubbed The Unity in the Community Campaign; it was very successful and mobilized the entire community.

In addition to the scholarships, the brunch will honor many of those individuals who took part in that Unity in Community mobilization. The brunch's theme, “Inspiration Meets Aspiration”: Fabulous, Fit, Fun and Fantastic: Unit-ing Generations,” will focus on the many and varied contributions to our community of those individuals 50 and older. The honorees contributions have been broad and vast and have been the foundation for Milwaukee's central city community.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that the Milwaukee Community Journal hails from the 4th Congressional District. It has consistently informed and entertained readers for nearly 38 years. I am pleased to give praise to Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo and her staff for providing a voice to the community and offering educational opportunities to students. I wish them many more years of success.

### HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEATLES' HISTORIC VISIT TO OREGON COUNTY, MISSOURI

### HON. JASON T. SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 22, 2014*

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th Anniversary of The Beatles's historic weekend visit to Oregon County, Missouri. In 1964 The Beatles visited The Ozarks of Oregon County, Missouri in September for a weekend of rest and relaxation at the Pigman Ranch.

I also would like to recognize the Ozarks of Oregon County, Missouri as the official September 19, 1964 weekend destination of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr. The Alton Community Foundation is conducting the Ozarks Beatlemania Festival on the 12th and 13th of September this fall to celebrate this historic event in the Ozarks. The community of Alton looks forward to sharing the history and stories of the Fab Four's visit to nearby Pigman Ranch on September of 1964. Although Pigman Ranch is no longer owned by the Pigman family, the stories, the mystique and the uniqueness of the ranch remain.

With the Ozark Beatlemania Festival approaching, in which I am eager to attend, it is my pleasure to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the visit made by The Beatles to Oregon County, Missouri, before the House of Representatives.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. GEORGE HOLDING

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 22, 2014*

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 425 on July 16, 2014, I was unavoidably detained on my way to the House floor owing to a constituent meeting and consequently missed the Massie of Kentucky amendment vote to H.R. 5016. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye.”